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DEPT FOR AF/E AND AF A/S FRAZER

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SUBJECT: Somalia - TFG Prime Minister Gedi Resigns

REF: Nairobi 4163

Classified by PolOff Hodan Hassan. Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (SBU) Transitional Federal Government (TFG) Prime Minister Ali Mohamed Gedi offered his resignation to TFG President Abdullahi Yusuf on October 29 in Baidoa. Gedi's resignation follows several weeks of acrimonious political debate in parliament on whether a vote of confidence should be called on Gedi's government. Yusuf reportedly welcomed the resignation and announced the decision to appoint an interim prime minister very soon. The assumption in Baidoa is that Gedi's deputy, Salim Ibrow, will be the choice for interim prime minister until Gedi's successor is selected.

¶2. (SBU) Upon Gedi's arrival in Baidoa from Addis this morning, he met with Yusuf and Speaker of Parliament Adan Madobe. According to sources close to Yusuf, Gedi handed the president the resignation letter in the meeting. Gedi then proceeded to a hotel where he held a closed door meeting with his supporters to brief them about his decision to resign. Gedi reportedly then went to parliament around 1:00 p.m. local time where he gave a 15-minute speech highlighting the successes of the TFG in defeating terrorists elements and its subsequent relocation to Mogadishu. Gedi stated he made the decision to resign in the best interest of the country and the people of Somalia. He added that he would continue to serve his country both as a politician and professional. In Yusuf's remarks to parliament he welcomed the resignation and urged the parliament to now refocus its energies on accomplishing the remaining tasks in the transitional period.

¶3. (C) The Ambassador and Special Envoy met on October 29 with Mohamed Abdirizak, Yusuf's Deputy Chief of Staff. Abdirizak reiterated the TFG's desire to select a prime minister who can appeal broadly to the Hawiye community. The search for possible candidates revolves primarily but not solely on the Hawiye/Abgal. He offered several names that have been discussed thus far including:

Abdullahi Warsame Nur - former police colonel and Minister of Finance in the Barre government who lives in Ohio and recently underwent bypass surgery

Moahmed Aseyr Lugey - businessman and former military lawyer living in Dubai

Hassan Sheikh Ali - Phd student living in Malaysia with no government experience and a favorite choice of Ali Mahdi

Abdullahi Afrah - current TFG Minister of Trade and Commerce who claims to have the backing of the Abgal elders

¶4. (C) Abdirizak said that Yusuf has between 21 and 30 days in which he will need to select the prime minister's successor. There have not been wide consultations with various clan elders but rather Yusuf has been reaching out to contacts within the key communities. Abdirizak promised to share timely information with the United States on how the selection process is proceeding. He also stated that the Yusuf plans to introduce the recommendations of the National Reconciliation Congress to parliament for immediate ratification.

¶5. (SBU) COMMENT: It is not clear whether Gedi also resigned from his seat in Parliament, which he had previously indicated he would also do, or whether his resignation was only from the post of Prime Minister. We expect that he will travel from Baidoa to Nairobi today and that his further intentions will become known over the following days. END COMMENT

RANNEBERGER